

JAKE NAFSTED'S TONSINA ROADHOUSE

by Penney Durtschi

Excerpted from

The Alaska Journal, Autumn 1978



Roadhouses sprang up along Interior Alaska trails. These roadhouses were built about ten miles apart, or roughly as far as a party could travel on foot in one day.

The first buildings at the site of the Tonsina Road House were constructed some time between 1900 and 1903. Because no official title to the land was issued until 1956, it is not certain who built the first rough log buildings; but records show that early in 1903 Jacob Nafstad (known as Tonsina Jake) leased the building from Albert White for \$30 per month. By 1907, Nafstad had completed a large, two story log roadhouse, which included a saloon, general store and post office.



Nafstad's lodge, called Upper Tonsina Road House (he later built a roadhouse at Lower Tonsina about 15 miles north of Chitina) was one of the largest on the Valdez Trail. Located about eighty miles north of Valdez, the lodge sat at a fork of the Valdez Trail. The northern prong of the trail lead to the Gulkana area, where it then split off into trails to Fairbanks and Eagle City; the eastern prong followed the Tonsina River to the Nizina and Kotsina copper country near McCarthy.

An ad in the *Alaska Gazetteer* of 1907-08 welcomed travelers to the Upper Tonsina Road House with the promise of "hats, shoes, hay and grain for sale," as well as a guide service.

Also in 1907, the Valdez to Fairbanks trail was widened and became passable for horse-drawn road sleds. Long sled trains began to pass along the trail from Valdez loaded with supplies for the interior. In those days, a passenger could make a trip from Valdez to Fairbanks by fast bobsled in eight days at a cost of \$150, not including lodging and meals. By 1910, the trail was improved enough to accommodate wagons carrying light freight. In 1913, the first auto, a Model T Ford, mad the 385 mile trip from Valdez to Fairbanks in 32 running hours.

The Copper River & Northwestern Railway, begun at Cordova in 1907, was completed to Chitina by 1911. About this time a sled trail from Chitina to Fairbanks was used extensively. Traffic on the trail from Valdez began to dwindle after the railroad was built, and soon it was no longer profitable for Nafstad to operate the Upper Tonsina Road House.

The Upper Tonsina post office was closed in 1916 and shortly thereafter Nafstad closed the entire roadhouse. Nafstad sold the roadhouse in 1925.

Editor's note: Nafsted is the correct spelling.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS OBITUARY

Well, it seems that March has snuck up on me! It is March 1, and I am still working on this month's newsletter.

The Jake Nafsted token from Tonsina has been appearing on a regular basis in auctions and eBay. As a "hoard" token, we have watched its value decline. It now appears that the hoard is dispersed and appearances are less frequent. I came across this article and reprinted only the portion about Jake Nafsted. Get a hold of the Autumn 1978 Alaska Journal to read the whole article.

Auction results on eBay this month have been mixed. The good stuff continues to do well, while much mid-range material goes unsold at opening bids.

We are starting a new column this month by Dave Phillips on wooden nickels. Dave is writing this primarily for a Canadian wooden money publication, and has consented to allowing us to publish it also.

Wyatt Earp is back on eBay. See page 24 for a \$100,000 set of poker chips from the Dexter Saloon!

Finally, the last page offers a few one ounce silver medals, as well as some of the Alaska Mint products for 2005. I must admit that the gold relief Iditarod medal is one of the most stunning they have minted.

Alaskan Token Collector & Polar Numismatist, published 10 times per year, is a publication of Alaska Rare Coins. All articles remain the property of the authors and may not be reprinted without their consent.

Editor - Dick Hanscom
Associate Editor - Jerry Cleworth
Anchorage Correspondent - vacant
Canadian Correspondent - Jerry Remick
Yukon Correspondent - Jim Robb
Scandinavian Correspondent - Jorgen Somod

Subscription Rates: (all first class or airmail)
United States - \$15 per year
Canada - \$18 per year
Elsewhere - \$35 per year

Collector's Advertising Rates:
1 page - \$15 1/2 page - \$8 1/4 page - \$5
1/8 page (business card size) - \$15 for 5 issues

Classified ads: 20 cents per line.
Commercial advertisers: write for rates



Once again we must report the loss of one of our collecting fraternity. Jim Griffin of Ward Cove passed away May 17, 2004. I learned of his passing when his wife, Mary Ann renewed their subscription to the newsletter.

I met Jim only a couple of times, so did not know him well. Mary Ann says, "Jim sure did enjoy collecting, especially Alaskan tokens. I think he felt that eBay took a lot of the fun out of the chase though. When we used to go south we would always head for a coin shop or one of those paper shops on First Ave. in Seattle and look for tokens and post cards. We'd get so excited if we found something, and now it's all just a click of the mouse away."

Our thoughts and best wishes are with Mary Ann and their sons Kevin and Sean.

RUSSIAN AMERICAN CO. NOTES

This January, Stack's sold six Russian American Company notes. These notes have variously been reported as seal skin and walrus skin. Ron Benice likes "choose your skin." In any case they are parchment, a paper-like material made from animal skin.

10 Kopeck, Choice XF	\$9200
10 Kopeck, VF	\$8625
25 Kopeck, Choice About Unc. +	\$8050
50 Kopeck, XF+	\$10,350
1 Rouble, Choice VF	\$8625
1 Rouble, About Unc.	\$8625

Prices include 15% buyers fee.

Submitted by Ron Benice.

PRICES REALIZED

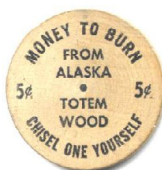
Selected prices realized from eBay:

Alakanuk , Alstrom, set of 6.	OB75.00	McCarthy , Golden Hotel, 12½¢, B-2a	15.00OB
Anchorage , Dairy, Pint, B-7a	OB45.00NB	McCarthy , Johnson Hotel, 12½¢, B-4a	17.76
Anchorage , Cheechako, 12½¢, B-11bv	23.60	McCarthy , Johnson Hotel, 12½¢, B-4a	17.76
Anchorage , DD Club, 12½¢, B-15ai	95.00OB	McCarthy , Johnson Hotel, 12½¢, B-4a	15.60
Anchorage , Masonic, B-28bi	156.50	Nenana , Ghezzi, 25¢, B-3ai	66.00
Anchorage , Union Cb, 12½¢, B-37a	OB175.00NB	Nenana , Smoke House, 12½¢, B-7a	43.22
Cape Edwards , DSSCo., 5¢, B-1a	360.00	Nome , The Bank, 12½¢, B-6b	435.00
Cape Newenham , NCO, 25¢, B-17	OB15.00NB	Nome , B of T, 12½¢, B-8eii	595.00
Chatanika , Bingle Fritz, 25¢, B-1a	OB95.00NB	Nome , Colorado Pharm., 12½¢, B-16a	OB200.00
Chatanika , Dempsey, \$1, B-3c	25.00OB	Nome , Columbia, 1 Drink, B-17a	995.00
Chisana , Anderton, 25¢, B-1a	OB15.00NB	Nome , Mulloy, 25¢, B-33a	125.00OB
Chisana , Anderton, \$1, B-1c	11.50	Nome , NP Bakery, 10¢, B-39-b	OB95.00NB
Chisana , Anderton, \$5, B-1d	OB15.00NB	Nome , Polet, 25¢, B-41e	25.00OB
Cordova , Club B.H., 5¢, b-9a	18.00	Noorvik , Cooperative, set of 8	80.00OB
Cordova , Hegg, 5¢, B-17a	231.82	Palmer , ARRC, 1¢, B-1a	75.00
Cordova , C. Hotel, 12½¢, B-13a	OB15.00NB	Palmer , ARRC, 10¢, B-1c	41.27
Cordova , C. House, H&C, 5¢, B-14a	OB60.00NB	Palmer , ARRC, \$1, B-1f	228.00
Cordova , Horseshoe, 6¼¢, B-20a	OB70.00NB	Palmer , ARRC, \$5, B-1g	229.06
Cordova , Northern Drug, 25¢, B-28a	96.00	Palmer , ARRC, \$10, B-1h	228.25
Cordova , Rosswog, 6¼¢, B-34b	OB45.00NB	Port Alexander , Dalsbo, 25¢, B-2b	44.00
Cordova , United Bakery, 12½¢, B-37a	210.71	Quinhagak , Jean, 25¢, B-1a	OB35.00NB
Dalby , Notti, 25¢, B-1a	713.12	Rose Inlet , So. AK Can., 25¢, B-1c	686.12
Douglas , D. Bakery, 1 Loaf, B-7a	390.00	Selavik , Rotman, 50¢, B-1b	OB25.00NB
Eek , McIntyre, 25¢, B-1a	45.00OB	Seldovia , Cash Store, 5¢, B-5a	OB45.00NB
Egegik , Nakat Pkg., 25¢, B-1c	439.00	Seldovia , Cash Store, 5¢, B-5a	RL26.00
Fairbanks , Horseshoe C.S. Spinner	66.21	Seward , Northern, 12½¢, B-8bii	OB2.99
Fairbanks , Horseshoe C.S. encased cent	OB29.99NB	Seward , Northern, 12½¢, B-8bii	24.50
Fairbanks , Masonic, B-33b	94.12	Seward , Northern, 12½¢, B-8bii	47.50
Fairbanks , Meyer, 25¢, B-35a	95.00OB	Seward , Northern, 12½¢, B-8bii	49.00
Goodnews Bay , Jean, \$1, B-1c	30.00OB	Seward , Northern, 12½¢, B-8biii	OB45.00NB
Indian Mt. , NCO OM, 5¢, B-1ai	5.00OB	Seward , Seattle Bar, 6¼¢, B-12b	777.00
Juneau , Burford's, 50¢, B-12c	OB35.00NB	Seward , Seward Bar, 12½¢, B-14a	35.00OB
Juneau , Burford's, 50¢, B-12c	33.32	Skagway , B of T, 12½¢, B-4d	102.50
Juneau , Elks, 12½¢, B-19bi	OB50.00NB	Skagway , Idaho Saloon, 25¢, B-14c	19.99OB
Juneau , M&J, 6¼¢, B-44a	266.51	Skagway , McCreedy & Elliot, set of 7	OB150.00
Juneau , SF Bakery, 1 Loaf, B-65a	1.99OBRNM	Tee Harbor , APF, 5¢, B-1a	1,500.00
Juneau , SF Bakery, 1 Loaf, B-65a	12.08	Tenakee , Col. Sal. Co., 5¢, B-2a	1,500.00
Ketchikan , Artic Club Room, 25¢, B-4a	35.00OB	Thane , Dug's Place, 6¼¢, B-3a	805.00
Ketchikan , Langes, \$1, B-29c	OB30.00NB	Tonsina , Nafsted, 12½¢, B-1a	OB53.00
Ketchikan , Langes, \$1, B-29c	OB20.00NB	Valdez , Blackwell/Rowdy, B-2a	175.00OB
Ketchikan , Langes, \$1, B-29c	10;99	Valdez , Copper Block, \$1, B-4ci	600.00OB
Ketchikan , Lotus PBP, 5¢, B-31b	314.21	Dawson, YT , Kilgore & Landahl	OB199.00NB
Ketchikan , Lotus Buffet, 6¼¢, B-31c	46.25	AYPE , ¼DWT, 1909, ICG MS-61	160.60RNM
Ketchikan , Nelson Hotel, \$1, B-34b	OB20.00NB	AYPE , ½DWT, 1909	OB155.50
Ketchikan , Pioneer Barclay, 25¢, B-42b	45.00OB	AYPE , ½DWT, 1909, ICG AU-58	108.50RNM
Ketchikan , Pioneer PR, 10¢, b-47a	10.50	AYPE , ½DWT, 1909, ICG MS-62	306.57
Ketchikan , Quality Bakery, 1 lf, B-48a	25.50	AYPE , ½DWT, 1909, ICG MS-61	OB279.00NB
Ketchikan , Scoug's, 25¢, B-56b	OB7.00NB	AYPE , 1 DWT, 1909	OB265.00NB
Ketchikan , Stedman, 12½¢, B-60aai	9.99OB	AYPE , 1 DWT, 1909	195.00OB
Ketchikan , Stedman, 12½¢, B-60aai	OB15.00NB	AYPE Lot , (2) 1 DWT, (1) ½DWT, (2) ¼DWT	
Ketchikan , Stedman, 12½¢, B-60bi	OB25.00NB	and a Byzantine gold, and a couple of other items	898.99
Koyukuk River , Laboski, 25¢, B-2a	426.21		

OB = Opening Bid NB = No Bid RL = relist
RNM = Reserve Not Met R = Reserve
BIN = Buy it now

MONEY TO BURN

by David Phillips



It started as a whim. On an impulse in 1999 at an auction, I bought a page of 20 Alaska woods. These, with the few I had previously acquired, got me seriously into collecting Alaska woods ever since.

I have also taken on the task of listing all known Alaska woods, whether I own them or only know of them. My listing is now closing in on 1,000.

In the course of acquiring these woods I have become aware of many interesting aspects and interesting stories about some of these. I thought I would share these with readers of ATC&PN.

The farthest west Alaska wood.

Adak - this place is way out there! It is closer to Siberia than it is to the main body of Alaska.

The city of Adak is located on the NE side of Adak Island, one of the Andreanof Island group. Adak was a U.S. military base from 1942 until 1997 when it was officially closed. The 6,000 population shrunk very rapidly until today the population is only about 90 persons.

The wood shown below is the only wood that I am aware of that has come out of Adak. This wood was produced and distributed in 1976 for the American Revolution Bicentennial. It is the standard 38mm size, printed on both sides in black ink.

I think that this is a unique wood in that it is from such a remote place, and furthermore, due to the radical downsizing of the community, it will likely be the only wood ever produced from Adak.

If anyone has additional information, I can be contacted at rustynbetty@telus.net.



GOLD PIPELINE MEDALS



Years go by and memories fade. One memory that has eluded me are the weights and finenesses of the 12 piece gold pipeline medal sets dated 1974 to 1977. My memory tells me they were all made in 1977 or 1978.

These medals were struck from the same obverse dies as the silver medals.

We received a phone call from a lady in Anchorage inquiring about her medals sets. From these conversations, and with the help of Roy Brown of Roy's Coins in Anchorage, we have determined the following:

18 Kt medal - each medal has a gross weight of 41 grams, with a pure weight of 26.63 grams. Total pure gold content is 10.275 troy ounces for the 12 piece set.

22 Kt medal - each medal has a gross weight of 38 grams, with a pure weight of 29.77 grams. Total pure gold content is 11.48 troy ounces for the 12 piece set.

These weights were determined by weighing one medal from each set in its original capsule. It was not possible to remove the medal from its capsule without damaging the capsule. We then deducted the weight of an empty original capsule to determine the actual weight of the medal. While we feel the weights are very close, they are not exact.

Below is the reverse used on the bronze set. I believe that the gold medals had a similar design.



MILITARY CHALLENGE COINS



CLEAR AFS: 13th Space Warning Sq., Sentinel of Space. Silver color with blue, white and black enamel.



EIELSON AFB: 354th Fighter Wing / Fight and support the fight, anytime anyplace. Bronze with red, white blue, green and yellow enamel.



EIELSON AFB: Team Eielson, Home of the Iceman. Silver colored with yellow, light blue, dark blue and white enamel.



(EIELSON AFB): USAF Survival School / Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape. On eBay attributed to Eielson. Bronze with white, black, yellow, light blue and dark blue enamel.



FORT RICHARDSON: Charlie 84th Engineer Combat Battalion (HVY) / Commander's Coin of Excellence. Bronze with red and white enamel.



ALASKA: U.S. Army Alaska, America's Arctic Warriors / Presented by the Command Sergeant Major for Excellence. Size unknown. Red, white and blue enamel with gold colored metal showing.



KEFLAVIK, ICELAND: USN Group / Integrity, Service, Excellence, ??, Annual Awards. Unfortunately, the image on eBay was not really sharp and most is not readable. It does have a very nice design incorporating the US and Iceland flags on the map of Iceland. Silver colored with red, white, blue and yellow enamel.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Most Challenge coins are about 38 to 40mm, though some are larger. Sizes are not usually reported in eBay listings. All are shown at approximately 38 mm, but it must be realized that unless a size is noted in the description, this size may not be accurate.

FOR THE RECORD



ANCHORAGE: Barry's Baranof Lounge, (drink). Gold on yellow and gold on white, 38mm, blank reverse.



ANCHORAGE: TGI Jerry's, good for one drink, black on wood (submitted by Ken Rieck).



ANCHORAGE: JJ's Sports Lounge, good for one drink. Black on wood (submitted by Ken Rieck).



(ANCHORAGE): Turnagain Tavern, Rain Check. Set of three poker style chips; red, white and blue with gold lettering, 39mm. Red previously reported.

ANCHORAGE: VFW 10252, good for one drink. Black on white plastic, 40mm. Illustrated at the top of the next column (submitted by Ken Rieck).



(ANCHORAGE) MT. VIEW: VFW 43rd Annual State Convention, good for one drink. Green aluminum, 32mm (submitted by Ken Rieck).



ANCHORAGE: RCA Alascom Suggestion Program. Black on wood. Illustration reduced. Actual size 47mm (wooden dollar size).



CORDOVA: Club Bar, 50¢, black on white plastic, 28mm. 25¢ and \$1 reported February 2001.

RARE COINS / BOOKS
GOLD/SILVER/BULLION

JEWELRY
ALASKANA

ALASKA RARE COINS
JERRY CLEWORTH / DICK HANSCOM
MEMBERS: A.N.A. AND P.C.G.S.

PHONE: (907) 452-6461

551 SECOND AVE., SUITE B
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701

FOR THE RECORD



KODIAK: Tropic Lounge, Draft. Green on yellow plastic, 38mm.



SEWARD: Yukon Bar, good for one of what you like. Looks like green on yellow plastic, but not sure of the colors, 38mm (submitted by Kurtis Hawk).



SITKA: Pioneers of Alaska, 66th State Convention, good for one drink. Black on wood.

WASILLA: Wasilla Bar, good for one drink: Call (black on red); Premium (black on blue). Plastic, 40mm (submitted by Ken Rieck). Illustrated below.



MAVERICK: Lowe's, good for 5¢ in trade, brass, 21mm. On eBay, possibly Dillingham. No bidders at the opening bid of \$9.99.



MAVERICK: Cabinet Saloon. Another from eBay, possibly from Ketchikan. Brass, 21mm. Sold for \$202.00 on the strength of being a saloon token

EDITOR'S NOTE: The reporting of these mavericks does not support or refute possible attributions, but are reported solely for information purposes.



DOUGLAS: Douglas Bakery, good for one loaf bread. Listed (B-7a) but not illustrated. A dug specimen. PR on eBay \$390.

ALASKA: Elongated cent with Beam whisky bottle. Illustrated below, right.

THEY'RE BAAAAACK!!!



The Wyatt Earp Dexter Saloon chips are back on eBay. The “25” first appeared in the November 2000 issue. It appeared again in March 2002. Then, in the Aug/Sept 2002 issue, we report that the “25” and the “50” were offered on eBay. Sorry, but I was not keeping track of Prices Realized at the time.

This seller has even provided a nice case. They say packaging is everything. Opening bid is \$100,000. Hey, might just as well go for the gusto! We reproduce his text in its entirety from his auction below:

“This is a once in a lifetime deal. This is an original one-of-a-kind poker set. This poker set is an antique set that was made in 1899 in Alaska. It came from the Dexter Saloon at Nome, Alaska and Wyatt Earp himself used these poker chips in the first saloon he acquired.

“It is very hard for me to part with these chips, as they are a family collectible. But I have a new daughter on the way, and I could use the money for her, a house, and a vehicle.

“Serious inquiries only please. If you have any questions please email me at r_mathis@wfec.com. I will be happy to answer any questions. Thanks for looking at my auction and happy bidding.”

Fortunately, the opening bid is so ridiculous, I don’t think anyone will bite on it. The only question is - who is making these?? This seller’s “location” is Oklahoma. If memory serves me, previous sellers were in Arizona. And they were selling at considerably lower levels.

2005 MEDALS

The 2005 **Official Alaska State** medals are available in all sizes as follows:



- 1 oz. silver with gold relief - \$60.00
- 1 oz. silver proof - \$32.00
- 1 oz. silver matte - \$17.00
- ½ oz. silver - \$10.00
- ¼ oz. silver - \$8.50
- 1/10 oz. silver - \$5.00
- 1/20 oz. silver - \$5
- 1 oz. gold - \$550.00 (price subject to change)
- ½ oz. gold - \$300.00 (price subject to change)
- 1/10 oz. gold - \$85.00
- 1/20 oz. gold - \$55.00

Alaska Gold Rush-Gold Panner



- 1 oz. silver with gold relief - \$60.00
- 1 oz. silver proof - \$32.00

Iditarod



- 1 oz. silver with gold relief - \$60.00
 - 1 oz. silver proof - \$32.00
- INCLUDE POSTAGE OF \$3 PER ORDER.**

ALASKA SILVER COIN



We originally showed you these in the January issue of 2004. We had purchased a quantity, and only 1 had the thin or fine line engraving. We have recently purchase a lot of silver, and it had two of the fine line versions. We offer these for \$20 each. The thick line version is \$10.

ALASCOM MODIFICATION



In another batch of silver, we obtained two Alascom Aurora one ounce silver medals with "The Performance People" neatly ground off. The entire side has a polished appearance. We can only speculate that it was either A: officially done because of a problem with the slogan, or B: done by a dissatisfied Alascom customer. We think B is more likely! The modified pieces are \$15, while the normal are \$10.